(in tonnes)

Season	Production	Domestic Consumption	Export
1995-96	225,000	75,000	1,50,000
1996-97	242,000	80,650	1,61,350
1997-98	260,000	86,650	1,73,350
1998-99	280,000	93,350	1,86,650
999-2000	300,000	1,00,000	2,00,000

Forum of Indian ocean Nations

5114. SHRI G. Y. KRISHANAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Indian Ocean nations agree on forum" appearing in "The Observer of Business and Politics", New Delhi dated 5th April, 1995;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) how far the proposed RIM trade will benefit India and in what spheres of exports of Indian products and imports from the Indian Ocean nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The first meeting launching the Indian Ocean Rim Initative for Regional Economic Cooperation was held in Mauritius from 29—31 March, 1995. Apart from India countries invited by the Government of Mauritius to the meeting were Australia, Kenya, Oman, Singapore and South Africa. The meeting agreed on certain fundamentals of Indian Ocean Rim Regional Cooperation in adopting principles and objectives of identifying the scope of activities. The focus of cooperation is to be economic and will cover the areas of trade, investment, infrastructure, tourism, science & technology and human resource development. The meeting in Mauritius set up a Working Group which would formulate ideas and proposals to achieve objectives and advance implementation of the activities identified by it. An Intergovernmental Meeting to be convened by Mauritius within twelve months would consider the report of the working Group.

(c) While increase in intra-regional trade among the participating countries is generally expected to benefit these countries, it is too early to make an assessment of the quantum of benefit to India.

Cooperation between Tobacco Board and CTRI

5115. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tobacco Board is working closely with CTRI Rajahmundry to pass on the benefits of latest research to farmers in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, details of cooperation initiated by the Tobacco Board with CTRI; and

(c) what benefits have accrued to tobacco farmers?